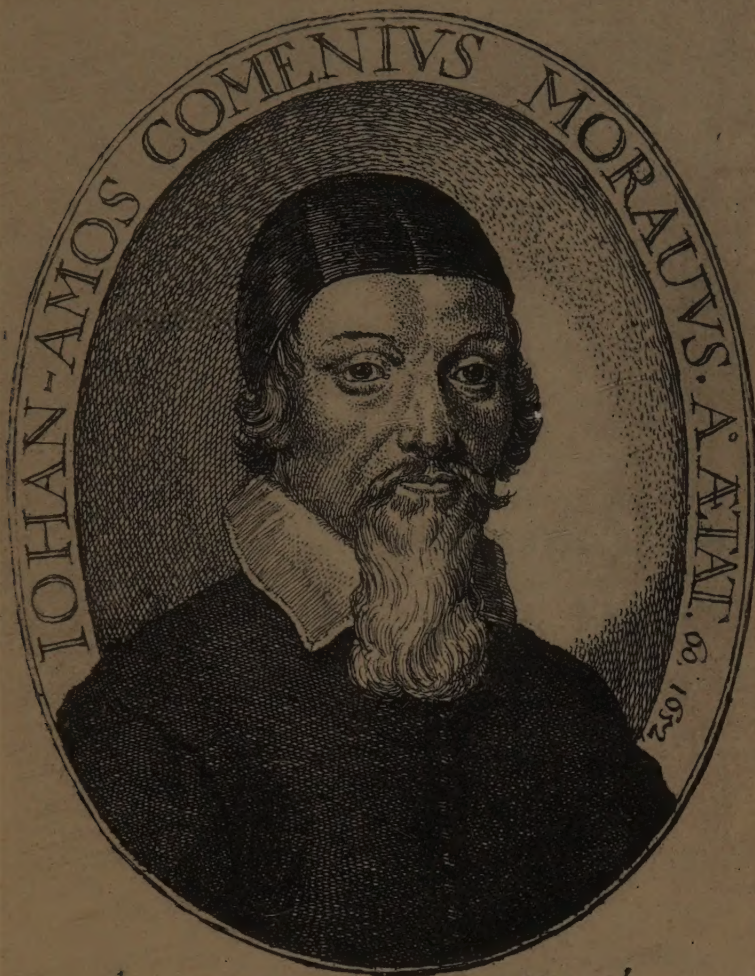


JOHANNES AMOS COMENIUS





*Loe, here an Exile, who to serue his God,
Hath sharply tasted of proud Pashurs Rod,
Whose learning, Piety, & true worth beeing knowne
To all the world, makes all the world his owne,*

JOHANNES AMOS
COMENIUS

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F O R E W O R D

by

T. G. M A S A R Y K.

President

of the Czechoslovak Republic

The authors of this handsome publication on Comenius have honoured me with a request to write a foreword to it.

I cannot take it upon myself to discuss the great teacher of our nation and of mankind in his rôle of pedagogue, but will confine myself to a few words about Comenius as philosopher and politician. Even in this connection he shows himself as the father of modern pedagogics, he regarded education and educational methods as part, and indeed the principal medium, of the general culture both of the nation and of mankind as a whole.

Comenius perceived, from the events that were taking place throughout the world, that a new age was dawning — a renewal of the whole earth, as he called it. A new education a new culture was, first and foremost, and indeed exclusively, to serve this rebirth. Plato in his Ideal State had already outlined the education of the masses, and this, too, was the aim of Comenius. And is not education to-day everywhere undertaken by the State? Comenius was — to use a current expression — one of the first to demand an educational and cultural policy in the true sense of the word.

This — his life's aim — was really only the outcome

of the endeavours and the ideal of the Reformation, and it was the ideal of our nation. Comenius realized, let us remember, that the Czech nation was the first, as a nation, to effect a religious reformation, and fought and suffered for centuries for that reformation. Before Hus there had been many reformers, both individuals and considerable groups, but our nation was the first to champion as a nation the ideals of the Reformation. Our history, indeed, from the death of Hus to the death of Comenius, a period of two centuries and a half, was one long effort for the attainment and defence of reformation.

It is on this historical background that the true figure of Comenius stands out. If we regard Christianity, in the sense of its founder, as a religion of love, we are faced with the problem how to understand that Christians, Churches and States have for centuries, for nearly two thousand years, preached the love and charity enjoined by Christ but have little observed them in practical life. Thus the violence done to Hus and his martyr's death became the starting point of the Hussite wars and the religious wars of Europe. This terrible experience soon aroused amongst us a campaign against war. The most consistent champion of war against war was Chelčický, the founder of the Church of the Czech Brethren,

or, as it is called in England and America, the Moravian Church. Comenius adopted, in modified form, Chelčický's idea of absolute non-resistance to evil. He therefore proclaimed the ideal of ever-enduring peace, that is, of love and religious tolerance, then little known in the disputes of the churches, and in the name of Christian brotherhood he called, first of all, for a union of all the Protestant Churches. In practice this effort meant love and devotion to one's own nation and language and at the same time love and charity towards all other nations. Comenius himself provides a splendid example of how it is possible to harmonize nationality and international sentiment. Exiled from his native land under the policy of vengeance pursued by the Habsburgs, he wandered from country to country and gained for his cause and for his nation the sympathies of those countries, not by mere political propaganda, but by the fact that he worked in all and for all. From the point of view of his writings, this is seen in his use of the Czech tongue for arousing and informing his own nation, and in his use of the international language — Latin — for the awakening and education of other peoples.

Comenius believed in the leading watchword of the Reformation and the Renaissance — in a rebirth of the

nations and of humanity. To-day he would have expressed himself as a believer in progress. From a practical point of view the rebirth could be, and was to be, attained by education, by a new system of education. Thus the Bishop of the Church of the Czech Brethren became the teacher, the pedagogue, of all nations.

This new education could only be successfully carried through on the basis of a new conception, a new philosophy. Hence spring Comenius' efforts in the direction of Pansophy. The sense of Pansophy may be briefly elucidated by the contemporary aim at what in England was called synthetic philosophy, and what we call a harmonious view of the world and life. Descartes reproached Comenius with mixing philosophy with theology. Similarly, however, the historians of philosophy reproach Descartes with many scholastic elements. In some measure Descartes is right. Comenius represents a certain stage in the development of thought from theology to philosophy. Comenius, one may say, strove for a philosophical theology and thus became the forerunner of modern and present-day theologians. It was always the *via lucis* that he desired to take, and for that reason it is interesting to observe how this Bishop of his Church, although at times he falls into the utopia of the mille-

nium, does not present a system of theology nor indeed of theological treaties, though in everything he consistently furthers religion. The Bible sufficed him as a common religious basis for all Churches and as a religious and moral standard for all persons and all nations.

Comenius was concerned for practical Christianity, for Christian love, but active, effective love. To this ideal he devoted his whole life. He therefore worked unceasingly and with ever renewed energy on his educational and didactic system. It is instructive how again and again he proclaimed his leading ideas in various writings, both popular and scientific. Herein one may see not only Comenius' personal, but also his racial and national character — we are, and must be, a nation of conscious and convinced workers. This I learnt from Comenius and realized it from him. In my political journeyings in all parts of the world during the war I carried with me not only the Bible of the Czech Brethren — the Kralice Bible — but also Comenius' *Testament*.

T. G. Meseryk.

THE year 1928 is the tricentenary of the year when JAN AMOS KOMENSKÝ the great son of the Czechoslovak people, was obliged in consequence of the grievous ills which pressed upon his nation, to leave his native country. Like so many other of his fellow-countrymen, he was driven into exile owing to the vindictiveness of the victors against the Czechoslovak people when it failed to adapt its religious convictions to their commands.

This departure from his native country was a heavy blow to the greatest of Czechoslovak emigrants of all times; it was a heavy blow also to the Church entrusted to his wise leadership and to the entire Czechoslovak people. But just as everything connected with such great men as Jan Amos Komenský brings, ultimately and indirectly if not immediately, blessings to mankind, so also Komenský's exile brought to him the blessing of work to which he could devote more energy than was possible previously, whilst to mankind it brought the fruits of this work. Through his departure from his enslaved country, Jan Amos Komenský became a citizen of the entire civilized world, which was able to appreciate his work directed towards the perfecting of methods of instructions and the synthesizing of all human knowledge; from the teacher of his

nation he became the teacher of the whole of mankind. Therefore the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts, which since its inception has, together with the whole of the Czechoslovak people, regarded Jan Amos Komenský as the model of a teacher and man of learning, has decided to present to the foreign learned institutions this short account of his life activities in order to commemorate the year when he left his native country.

The Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts is convinced that the name of Jan Amos Komenský is one that is dear not only to his own nation, and consequently it feels impelled, on this occasion, to ask the associated learned institutions whether it is not desirable that the writings of a man with such a world reputation as that of Jan Amos Komenský should be made accessible to the world in an edition, with which would be connected, in some suitable manner, the learned institutions of the whole of the educated world to which Komenský dedicated his work.

JOSEF ZUBATÝ, D. PH.

Sometime Professor of the Caroline University of Prague,
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IN JAN AMOS KOMENSKÝ (*Johannes Amos Comenius*) Czech literature has a profound classical writer and the Czech people one of its greatest names, a name which has gained a world-wide reputation; through his educational activity he influenced the whole of humanity, and he has remained an educational force to the present day. The literature on Komenský, written not only in his native language but also in the languages of almost all the civilized nations, is immense. He takes his place amongst the greatest spirits of mankind also by reason of the fact that his worth as a literary figure increases steadily with the passage of the years; indeed, he is one who can be fully understood and valued only by posterity. Eventually his ideas found their way to his own nation which he so much loved and to which, as a supposed heretic, he was forbidden to return; his emancipating doctrines were denied access to his own people long after his death.

Komenský's memory was honoured long after his death by his fellow-exiles, the Czech Protestants, and on other grounds by the different nations. The Czech exiles found in him, through his writings, a wise and pious adviser and consoler in their hard and toilsome lives. Full of religious comfort, his writings were pub-

lished abroad for over a hundred years. Foreign nations more fortunate than his own nation whose cultural development was broken by heavy military disasters, valued Komenský, even during his life-time, as a great educationalist. They studied his didactic, pedagogical and philosophical writings, particularly his «Opera didactica omnia» which he published in and after 1657 during his later and less careworn years at Amsterdam, the city described by him in his dedication to the City Council of Amsterdam as «the glory of the Netherlands and the joy of Europe».

Apart from the Czechs, Komenský is studied mostly by the Germans who have recognized that they owe the high level of their educational system chiefly to him. In 1892, the tricentenary year of Komenský's birth, the «Comeniusstiftung» was founded at Leipzig, whilst at Berlin the «Comenius-Gesellschaft» publishes the «Monatshefte der Comenius-Gesellschaft» and two other publications. Around these important institutions there have been grouped several thorough investigators of the works of Comenius. The Germans published and translated his writings as far back as the 17th century; his importance was recognized by many of their foremost men, such as the philosophers Leib-

nitz and Herder and the educationalist Georg Raumer. It is a characteristic fact that the Germans have, for example, five translations of Komenský's «Didaktika Veliká» and several monographs on Komenský.

Jan Amos Komenský was born on March 28th, 1592. His name is derived from the village of Komně not far from Uherský Brod in Moravia. His family belonged to the Unity of Brethren, which Church embodied in the 16th and 17th centuries the finest elements of the lengthy Bohemian Reformation. After the premature death of his parents, Komenský's guardians did not give him an adequate education, although they took the payment for this purpose. Jan Amos began to study only in the later years of his boyhood, first of all at home. In 1611 he left to take up higher studies at Herborn in Nassau. Many Bohemian Brethren, whose religious beliefs were closely allied to those of the Calvinists, went to study at the Calvinist Academy in Herborn and also at the University of Heidelberg, the other Calvinist institution of higher education. At Herborn, under the guidance of celebrated teachers like the translator of the Bible, Johann Fischer (Piscator), and the young philosopher Johann Heinrich Alsted, and by reading contemporary literature, Komenský not only

widened and deepened his knowledge but also experienced the influence of contemporary thought and feeling, especially the revived medieval chiliastic belief that Christ would soon return to rule on earth. Whilst still studying at the German universities, Komenský made his first attempts at writing, and already in these attempts we may observe evidences of the high aim with which the Unity of Brethren had been imbued by the enlightened adherents of Humanism: the grafting of world knowledge on the home literature. The student Komenský conducted learned philosophical debates — he upheld the views of Aristotle — and began to collect materials for an extensive work entitled «*Poklad jazyka českého*» (The Treasure of the Czech Language) which was intended to show the lexicological, grammatical and phraseological wealth of the Czech language and to serve at the same time as a safe and convenient bridge to the wide field of the Latin language. He was employed on this task for many years also at a later date. At Herborn Komenský gathered together material for a kind of encyclopaedia of natural sciences, mainly in the spheres of astronomy and geography. In addition to this, he collected material in the field of history for his «*Theatrum universitatis, To jest divadlo světa a*

všechněch všudy předivných věcí jeho», a title that was given to similar compendiums in the 16th century. Both works remained the life-task of Komenský. When after many years they were almost completed, they were destroyed by fire with the exception of a few fragments. Here is manifested, mainly in the second work, the endeavour of Komenský to compass as far as possible the entirety of human knowledge, and particularly to take the Bible as the basis for all knowledge and to demonstrate the vanity of human knowledge. All these works breathe the great love of Komenský for his native language. The young scholar had a lively interest in all branches of knowledge; there was not one which he considered to be foreign to him; with his systematic, clear-thinking mind he strove to form a harmonious whole from them all. This task he pursued consistently and steadily throughout his life.

Having lived for two years in Herborn, Komenský made some short journeys, going as far as Amsterdam; he then finished his studies at Heidelberg in 1614. In the same year he returned to Moravia, passing through Prague. Before he could enter the priesthood, he taught for a time, at the request of Karel ze Žerotína, in a school at Přerov belonging to the Unity of Brethren. Here he

applied, particularly in the teaching of Latin, methods that were more advanced than those previously known in Moravia, and he instilled knowledge into the minds of his pupils in a more humane manner. As a young theologian of 25, he came forward in defence of the Protestant Churches with a rather extensive, anonymous tractate entitled «*Retuňk proti Antikristovi a svodům jeho*» (1617). This work was not published, but manuscript copies were frequently made from it. The author makes an unusually sharp attack on the Pope as Antichrist and on the entire régime of the Roman Church; he is particularly forceful in his remarks with reference to the Jesuits who endeavoured to root out the Protestants and to bring everything into subjection to the Pope. At that time Komenský was deeply distressed, as is evident from his tractate, on account of the contemporary moral decline, and especially because of the cowardice of the Protestants and the weakening of their religious spirit. A characteristic feature of this document is that it shows the author's endeavour (similar efforts were made also prior to Komenský by other representatives of the Unity of Brethren, including Václav Budovec who was the political leader of the Czech Protestants) to effect an unification of the various

Protestant groups against the organized attack of the Roman Church. Komenský sought also to dispose the Catholic nobles favourably towards religious tolerance.

In 1618 and 1619, two of the happiest years in his life, Komenský was director of a school at Fulnek, a small town in North Moravia. Here he continued the studies which he began while at the university, and wrote a number of small essays, mainly on religious education. But the outbreak of the terrible 'Thirty Years' War, which began in Bohemia (the Czech people were the chief sufferers from it in the whole of Europe) and was felt also at Fulnek, broke up the happiness and the plans of Komenský. His property, his library and most of his manuscripts were destroyed by the rough Spanish soldiery, and he himself was obliged to leave his family and to seek a refuge in distant places. Whilst experiencing the blows of adverse fortune, he was affected more deeply by the impressions received from his university reading: his thought was dominated by religious pietism and mysticism. He believed in Christ's return to earth and surrendered himself to an ecstatic faith in the prophecy that there would be a favourable turn in the fortunes of the Protestants. A deep and lively faith is evident in his religious writings of this

period: «*Listové do nebe*», «*Přemýšlení o dokonalosti křesťanské*», two small parts of «*Truchlivý*», «*O sirobě*» and others. Although his personal affairs suffered most severely from the calamities of war, Komenský conscientiously fulfilled his pastoral duties to his sorely-trying flock. He recommended that the grief of loneliness should be overcome by trust in God and by unceasing recourse to the Bible which would provide comfort for everyone in all misfortunes. He called upon his hearers to remain steadfast in the faith and to be long-suffering. In one of these little books he reminded his fellow-sufferers that it was best «to accept everything — happiness and unhappiness, joy and sorrow, laughter and weeping — from His hand with thanksgiving».

The hardships of Komenský during his sojourn in Moravia reached their culminating point when the Church of the Brethren, which had been in a flourishing condition up till then, was destroyed at home, and abroad was scattered to all the corners of the earth; when the whole nation shared in the great calamity; and when Komenský's wife and two small sons fell victims to the plague. For four years from 1623 he found a refuge at Brandýs n. Orlicí in Bohemia on the estate of Karel ze Žerotína, the patron of the priests of the Unity of

Brethren. Komenský used this opportunity to the full by engaging in unwearying and successful literary activity, the product of an oppressed and sorely-trying heart.

Komenský freed himself from his mental depression by writing his «*Labyrint světa a ráj srdce*» (The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart), the greatest and most celebrated work of this period of Czech literature. He completed it in 1623 and dedicated it to his patron, Karel ze Žerotína. He published it for the first time in 1631 at Leszno in Poland, where he lived in exile. The story in this work is concerned with the author's pilgrimage to an allegorical town. In the introduction Komenský declares that the story is not merely fiction, but is taken mainly from his life. Inner reality shows itself throughout the whole composition; the reader discerns it even in the allegorical framework, which is quite unoriginal and conventional. The basic idea is an investigation of human life in the different classes and occupations from the point of view of the Christian religion. This idea is a favourite one in Humanist and Reformation literature and also in Czech literature. The direct impetus to the «Labyrinth» was given to Komenský by his teacher at Heidelberg, the Swabian theologian Johann Vale-

rian Andreae; in the latter's satirical Latin compositions the Biblical spirit produced as deep an impression on Komenský as did their liberal, patriotic and humanitarian ideas. With the exception of the external framework and certain insignificant details, however, Komenský's views are his own. He goes to look round the world in order to choose a suitable occupation and manner of life. And although his guides, «*Všudybud*» and «*Mámení*», desire to force upon him a fixed, superficial and materialistic conception and judgment of the whole of human life, the pilgrim does not surrender his sound judgment and view, based on Biblical doctrine, that this life is vanity and emptiness and that the individual can attain inner contentment and happiness only if he derives his strength from God. Frightened by the terrors of dying and visions of the after-world, the pilgrim at God's behest shuts himself within himself and surrenders his soul entirely to Christ. Having obtained true knowledge, he attains perfect bliss by union with God. The author had no intention of composing a work of fiction; his purpose was to write a religious work with a tendency similar to that of his other works. He carried out his plan, however, by using the devices of fiction. Many dangers threatened the author

in the execution of the work. Being an exact thinker, he omitted scarcely any of the then existing social classes and occupations; he leads the reader through all the branches of human knowledge and art, efforts and endeavours, amusements and pleasures, and through all the religious sects and tendencies. Monotonous thoroughness, which does not admit in human life thus conceived as a whole any divergence from a rigid system, easily wearies us, especially when there is an obvious lack of stirring action and when the general character of the work is abstract. But the mind of the reader is held spellbound by other charms in the composition: behind the allegorical covering he discerns actual life illumined by many-sided experiences and scourged by effective satirical comments; our interest is increased by autobiographical confessions and allusions. A rare vividness and a sense for significant detail, which is frequently accompanied by lively dramatic power, often cause the literary man to predominate over the meditative philosopher and the devout disciplinarian who consistently pursues his tendentious, religious idea. The reader allows himself to be carried away by the powerful phantasy, profound wisdom, personal modesty and lofty ideas of the zealous writer

who values the moral worth of the individual more highly than everything else. We experience the author's compassion for human beings in their apathy; we feel his ardent love for his neighbour; we respect his deep religious feeling, for which the reader is prepared in the second part, and we enjoy our intellectual treat. The «Labyrinth» is written in fresh, vivid and pithy language, and every phrase and expression reveals aptly the Czech spirit. Long after Komenský's death, his consolatory work was extremely highly valued by his exiled fellow-countrymen. In the period of the Czech national revival, the language of the «Labyrinth» was taken as a model of pure Czech.

The basis and tendency of the «Labyrinth» are seen also in a further Czech work, the «*Centrum securitatis*» (*Hlubina bezpečnosti*), which was published in 1633. Komenský composed the «Hlubina» in 1626 when he was living near the frontier at the foot of the Giant Mountains, when still darker clouds were gathering over the non-Catholics who had to endure ever-increasing injustices, and when individual Protestants were forced to leave the country on account of harsh persecution. Komenský endeavours, mainly by means of images, to explain to the ordinary reader metaphysical

ideas, particularly the relation of man to God: the world in relation to God is only like a shadow in relation to its object. God is the «centre of security». Man is in an intermediate position between God and the elements. If he strives to approach the centre (God), he ensures his own happiness. The «Centrum securitatis» is consequently a clever variation of «The Labyrinth of the World» and especially of its second part, «The Paradise of the Heart». For his own comfort and for that of his fellow-believers, in order to rise superior to the hardships of this world, Komenský translated into Czech the Psalms of David. Like the Humanist translators in other nations, he chose for this purpose classical metres: the elegiac distich, Sapphic strophe, and iambics. He translated in hexameters a celebrated code of medieval moral views and of the social order, together with «Cato's Moral Distich». As in the case of three of his predecessors who attempted this task several centuries previously, Komenský pursued pedagogical aims.)

By means of intensive work Komenský forgot his own hardships and those of his native country. In 1622 he completed a map of Moravia, a much more thorough and discriminating work than similar works executed by his predecessors. This map was published by foreign

geographers. To his homeland he dedicated his «*Starožitnosti moravské*» (Moravian Antiquities), a work which is known only by name and has not been preserved. Komenský dedicated many works to his fellow-believers. In order to facilitate the task of the priests of the Unity of Brethren, whose educational level and religious and moral zeal had declined in consequence of the long war, Komenský composed for them a particularly needful book, the «*Theatrum Scripturae*», as it is entitled in the manuscript (it was completed in 1623), or the «*Manuál-ník aneb jádro celé biblí svaté*», as it is called in a later edition of Komenský's works.

Before his departure into exile Komenský was sent with other priests of the Unity of Brethren to Poland and Silesia to secure a refuge for their fellow-believers. He travelled as far as Berlin. On the journey they heard of the prophecies of a certain tanner, Christopher Kotter by name, who foretold a speedy end to the sufferings of the persecuted Protestants. Komenský, who from his student years had shown a tendency towards mysticism, accepted Kotter's prophecies wholeheartedly and urged others, including the Bohemian «Winter King», Frederick of the Palatinate, to believe in them. With equal trustfulness, although Kotter's pro-

phacies had meanwhile proved false, Komenský believed the visionary predictions and comforting words of a girl named Kristina Poniatowska, the daughter of a Polish priest of the Unity of Brethren. He was her protector on the occasion of her departure to Poland. In difficult times even a man with such a strong and intelligent mind as that of Komenský readily surrenders to deceptive visions and dreams, in order to see a curtailment of the adversities of his brethren. Komenský was held captive by this mood of religious mysticism until the year 1648, when his last hope in a favourable turn of events was destroyed.

After new and sharper decrees had been issued against the non-Catholics (1627), Komenský withdrew to the estates of Jiří Sadovský, a member of the Unity of Brethren; these estates were situated in the Giant Mountains and Komenský went there in order to be close to the frontier. Soon he was obliged to cross the frontier, never to return. He went with a considerable number of Bohemian Brethren into Poland and settled in the town of Leszno where there lived many descendants of Brethren who had been exiled from Bohemia after the persecutions of the year 1547. Owing chiefly to their merits, the school at Leszno was one

of the best in the country; in 1624 it was transformed into a Gymnasium. Komenský assisted in the teaching and prepared the children of the Brethren for university studies abroad. At Leszno he completed his «*Didaktika čili umění umělého vyučování*» with a supplement entitled «*O obnovení škol v Čechách*». The stimulus for this was derived from the German «Didactics» of E. Bodin, which he read with great interest during his stay in the Giant Mountains. This shows the great love of educated Czechs for enlightenment, for Komenský composed this work in order to improve the education of his benefactor's children; and also he was able to find in the rich library of another Czech landowner living at the foot of the Giant Mountains a book devoted to the improvement of education. Komenský wrote the greater part of his «Didaktika» while still in his native country, in order to further the welfare of his nation. The work was completed in Poland in the year 1632. The author hoped, as he confesses in touching words, that his nation would again receive God's compassion; he considered that there would be need above all to help the young people at home by establishing new schools, by supplying them with good books, and by introducing natural and clear me-

thods, «so that love for the art of literature, and love of virtue and piety might begin once more to flourish to the uttermost»). He exhorted his fellow-countrymen to take a foremost position in the path to progress and not to wait until this position was taken by the French, the English and the Germans; he urged his fellow-countrymen not to lag behind others, but to endeavour to lead the way. Komenský pointed out here the universal principles in instruction and upbringing. Later he rewrote the work in Latin. He extended it, gave it the title of «*Didactica Magna*» (*Didaktika Veliká*), and published it at Amsterdam in 1657.

This work has been translated into many languages: five times into German, twice into Italian, and into English; it has been translated also into the Slavonic languages: twice into Russian, and into Polish and Slovene.

His teaching activity in Leszno encouraged Komenský to make a thorough reform of the teaching of Latin. Whilst still living in his native country, he wrote for this purpose a short Latin grammar. After a further study of books and after long practice and hard thinking, he put together an excellent system which he described in his «*Janua linguarum reserata*» (*Brána jazyků otevřená*); this work was first published in La-

tin in 1631 and in the same year in German; two years later it was published in Czech under the title of «Dvěře jazykův odevřené». The title of the book is taken from the book written by the Spanish Jesuit Batho. For the most part, however, Komenský arrives at the exact opposite of what he found in that celebrated little book. Already in his «Didactics» he had pointed out that side by side with the learning of a foreign language there should be a study of the subject-matter; and he had deprecated the cramming of grammatical rules. He had urged that in the teaching of a foreign language the mother tongue should be taken as the starting-point. In the «Janua» he invented an excellent system: he compiled 100 paragraphs with 1000 sentences containing 8000 of the commonest Latin words from all branches of knowledge. The instruction proceeds in accordance with a rational plan from nature to man, his life and his relation to God. There is a methodical progression from the simplest sentences to the complicated ones. The objects are learned at the same time as the words denoting them. This method proved so successful that the «Janua» appeared in several new editions and frequently with supplementary material added by the publishers; the book

was translated into twelve European and four Asiatic languages. It found its way also into Jesuit schools. For the new Czech edition of the work Komenský compiled a special supplement of Czech proverbs which had already aroused considerable attention in the Unity of Brethren on account of its serious contents and also of its pithy and clever form. The collection, which remained in manuscript, was entitled: «*Moudrost starých předků za zrcadlo vystavená potomkům*».

The Humanists paid particular attention to proverbs. The «Adagia» of Erasmus was read and imitated by other Humanists. In this collection there are over 2000 proverbs and sayings, arranged in 81 chapters and in accordance with the «Brána jazyků» («Janua»). Komenský had himself been collecting Czech proverbs during and after his student years, extending thus the older collection of proverbs compiled by the priests of the Bohemian Brethren; he took over from the older printed collections what he regarded as suitable.

The scope of the later Latin editions of the «*Janua linguarum*» was increased by the very extensive «*Methodus linguarum novissima*» (*O nejnovější metodě řeči*) which served as an introduction to them. This work aroused great attention in the learned circles of Europe

and received the support of foreign patrons. During this period Komenský's whole heart was in his magnificent pansophist plans, for which the greatest interest was shown in England, and consequently he wished to reach the completion of his work on languages. On the other hand the Swedish Government and Komenský's great supporter, the wealthy Dutch merchant L. de Geer, wanted him to produce textbooks. It was only unwillingly and after long mental struggles that Komenský decided to carry out their request. With the help of other scholars the above-mentioned work was completed in 1646 and three years later it was published in Leszno. It contains a survey of the European languages, an account of the development of language teaching, and an exposition of the author's own method of language teaching, a method which combines language instruction with a study of the objects to which the words learnt refer. In the new edition of the «*Janua*» Komenský divided language teaching into four sections according to the age of the pupil: the simplest and most concrete section entitled «*Vestibulum*» (*Předbrání*) was to introduce children to the Latin language; the original «*Janua*» was intended for children of a rather older age; the «*Palatium*» or «*At-*

rium» was written for young people, and its purpose was to teach them polished Latin, the language of the orators, letter-writers and poets. The fourth section, entitled «*Thesaurus linguae latinae*» (*Poklad latinské řeči*) was a collection of extracts from ancient and modern writers and from scientific and poetical works.

In addition to this, Komenský expanded in greater detail certain parts of his basic work, the «Didactics». He drew attention to the family training of children up to the age of six years in a delightful and unsurpassed little book entitled the «*Informatorium školy mateřské*», in which his tender love for children is combined with piety, moral earnestness and intelligence he shows how little children are to be taught the elements of various branches of knowledge and to live active, virtuous and pious lives. This little work Komenský wished to bestow upon his own nation, but owing to the unquiet times the opportunities for its circulation were small; hence the author translated it into German (published in 1633) and later into Latin. The Czech manuscript was not discovered until long afterwards. The «Didactics» was supplemented in another direction by an extremely popular work entitled «*Orbis pictus*»; it passed through many editions

and became a standard work for teaching by pictures.

These works carried the name of Komenský all over the educated world, which derived from them its educational principles. But Komenský's ideas were not fully understood until fairly recent times. The strength of these ideas is shown by the fact that they have become the common property of mankind. Komenský is not in everything an entirely original pioneer; with great receptivity and wide vision he followed everything provided by previous and contemporary thinkers. He learned from Johann Heinrich Alsted, J. Val. Andreae, V. Ratke, Juan L. Vives, Melanchthon, the philosophers Bacon of Verulam, Thomas Campanella, L. Bayle and many others. But every idea which he received passed through the sieve of his clear and consistent mind and was thought out to its logical conclusions; in this way it obtained a clear outline which entire future ages will be unable to change. From individual facts of knowledge Komenský formed a firm and clear system. And so after two centuries Komenský's educational principles still possess their full validity. The most popular of all was his new method of teaching. In place of medieval verbalism and the mechanical method of scholasticism he argued that words and

concepts must be taught from the things denoted by them; the pupil must use his own reason in order to train his own power of comprehension and thus arrive at real knowledge. Study has to proceed by means of object lessons and examples. Progress from the known to the unknown, from the simple to the complex and the abstract, from the general to the particular, the frequent repetition of suitably selected materials — these must be the ways to gain exact knowledge quickly and easily. Thought must be directed from the external world to the inner world, from observation through the senses to memory and the training of judgment. School instruction must pay attention to the needs of actual life. The process is on natural lines; nature itself teaches it. Instead of having recourse to violent and harsh punishments the teacher must impart knowledge with a spirit of reasonableness and kindness; he must set a good example and spread an atmosphere of enlightenment. The teacher must keep in mind the chief mental peculiarities of his pupils; in particular, the playfulness of the child must be made use of. The school must not, of course, be without discipline; if this is absent, the school is like a mill without water. In the lowest class the instruction must be given only in the

mother tongue of the pupils. The strictly systematic method of Komenský provides a precise guide as to how many hours a day should be devoted to work, recreation and rest respectively. He divided schooling exactly and sagaciously into four grades: in the family up to the sixth year, and then the elementary school; the third grade is the Latin school or Gymnasium (grammar school) and the last grade the university; for each grade Komenský laid down a course lasting six years. (He regarded travelling, undertaken after the university course, as a means of education.) With equal exactness Komenský classified also the sciences. According to his views, education should be accessible to all, without regard to birth, class, sex or age; this signified an element of progress on the social side. Komenský fixed his norms for pupils with average abilities; higher education should be accessible, of course, only to students with real ability. During the process of education efforts should be made always to develop all sides of the individual: the reason, the will and the feelings; education should likewise be concerned with the development of the physique and manual skill of the pupil. Bodily health and strength should be aimed at in the case of children from their earliest years; and human

life should be prolonged as much as possible through wise living. Komenský certainly deserved to be called a «teacher of nations».

As in the case of his predecessors, all Komenský's endeavours were derived from a double source: the Renaissance and the Reformation. Humanism in its original form, and particularly Italian Humanism, received many pagan elements in respect both of manner of life and views of life, and was largely foreign to Komenský. He knew the classical authors and especially the Latin writers Terence, Plautus, Ovid and Horace; as regards Greek philosophy, his teachers at Herborn had acquainted him mainly with the works of Aristotle which were a mine of knowledge for Komenský's philosophy. Komenský, however, did not rate highly Humanist formalism, and he had no liking for the poetical images taken over by the Christians from ancient mythology. In place of the pagan classics he recommended the Christian authors to be read in schools; he considered that only a man firmly grounded in the Christian faith could study without harm the pagan classics. Komenský had emancipated himself from ancient views of natural science whilst studying natural history. The study of Latin occupies the foremost place in his system;

he gives weight, however, to the study of the mother tongue in the school and introduces into his curriculum the natural sciences, astronomy, physics, geography and anthropology. All of these were not his original ideas, for he derived much from his predecessors and contemporaries, as has been already stated. In every branch of knowledge which he studied, Komenský endeavoured to the best of his ability to acquaint himself thoroughly with the specialist literature of the world.

The educational work of Komenský is permeated by the spirit of the Reformation much more than by that of Humanism. Like all the Reformers, he regarded the Bible as the sole source of wisdom for life; also he teaches us to seek the highest aesthetic benefit in the Bible. In the spirit of the Reformation, and particularly of the Unity of Brethren, he lays down that the ultimate aim of man should be to use the light of his reason for the purpose of free research; that he should endeavour to strive after enlightenment and unceasing progress in order to prove himself an intelligent being and the lord of creation, in order thus to arrive at a true knowledge of God, to draw near to Him, and in this way to increase his own virtue, morality and genuine piety and gain a living faith accompanied by

good acts'. Not until this is achieved can the training of the individual be considered as perfect. And the schools where this training is obtained will become real «workshops of humanity». Here we discern the mystical element, the chiliastic spirit, in Komenský's thought.

From the beginning of his literary activity Komenský tended towards pansophist endeavours. The term «pansophia» was a fairly common one at that period. Its basis must be sought for in Renaissance polyhistorism. Komenský began his pansophist experiments whilst still at his studies in Herborn when he prepared material for his «*Theatrum universitatis rerum*» (*Divadlo světa*). In this work he wished to gather as complete a collection as possible of scientific facts taken from all branches of knowledge. From the standpoint of his pansophist endeavours to bring together the whole of knowledge, he compiled his Latin work entitled «*Physicae ad lumen divinum reformatae synopsis*», which was published at Leipzig in 1633. He conceived the natural sciences and the contemporary alchemy, cosmology, astronomy and anthropology from the higher standpoint of religion. Nor did he reject the contemporary learned superstitions. With reference to nature, he taught that matter, spirit and light are interfused and

that everything is governed by the spirit, the will of God. Later he rewrote this textbook and published it on two further occasions during his life-time. It was translated into English in 1651 by John Dournam. A further step in the same direction was his Latin work entitled «*Janua rerum*» (*Brána věcí*) which bore the title also of «*Brána pravdivější moudrosti*» (1634): it was intended as a continuation of the «*Brána jazyků*». By means of a harmonious grouping together of facts young people were to gain a more detailed knowledge of things, to penetrate into their essence, and thence to pass to metaphysical concepts. This work is likewise celebrated for its systematic thought and clear exposition.

The learned world obtained its knowledge of Komenský's pansophist aims from the tractate entitled «*Praeludia conatuum pansophicorum Comenii*» (*Předběžná zpráva o pansofických snahách Komenského*), which was published, without the author's knowledge, at Oxford in 1637 by his ardent German admirer, Samuel Hartlib. The latter wished to secure support for the work, and two years later he published the «*Pansophiae prodromus*» (*Předchůdce vševedy*) and another tractate by Komenský dealing with his pansophist programme; these two works were reprinted in Hol-

land and Paris. Komenský's pansophist endeavours, the stimulus for which he obtained from the philosophy of Aristotle and from Bacon's «Magna instauratio scientiarum» and «Novum Organum», were received with enthusiasm by some of the contemporary scholars but met with the disapproval of others. Descartes criticised Komenský on the ground that he combined theology with philosophy; others considered that he secretly desired with the help of his pansophist works to assist in the spreading of Calvinism. Komenský defended himself against these criticisms and suspicions by means of a new explanation of his pansophist efforts. He declared that he desired in these works to simplify as much as possible the scientific knowledge of nature, human activity and particularly that of God, to separate unimportant things from the fundamentals, and to bring about an improvement in method. He endeavoured to create a complete synthetic science and a uniform Christian wisdom of life. From the pansophist endeavours there was to arise a practical philosophy; Komenský sought in them a means to bring about the moral ennoblement and improvement of mankind and to enable the individual to draw near to God and thus attain eternal bliss. The formation of the plans for the

carrying out of this magnificent idea and its successes brought him moments of great satisfaction, whilst non-comprehension and failure caused him the most painful disappointment.

At first it seemed that the omens for these plans were good. As he had gained an international reputation through his literary work, he was invited to visit foreign countries; a call came for him to go to Sweden in 1638 for the purpose of reforming the Swedish school system. He did not accept this invitation, however, because it could not satisfy his longing. On the other hand he accepted in 1641 the invitation of the English Parliament that he should pay a visit to London and with the assistance of other collaborators realise his pansophist plans. In the course of the preliminary preparations for this work, he composed his beautiful and interesting «*Via lucis*» (*Cesta světla* 1642; second edition, 1668), in which he enthusiastically expounded his pansophist dreams, the bringing of enlightenment to all, the raising of the moral level and the fraternization of mankind. The path to this lay in the direction of eternal peace. As means for the realization of his pansophist efforts, Komenský proposed the establishment of special schools (academies) in the dif-

ferent nations, schools which would be accessible to everyone and would be administered by a central academy composed of the foremost scholars of the world. The latter were to seek further paths for this end; in particular, they were to invent an artificial universal language which would be better adapted than Latin for furthering the progress of the sciences. Later, however, Komenský abandoned the idea of this artificial common language. In his «Nejnovější methoda jazyků» he no longer speaks of an artificial universal language, but leaves Latin as the universal learned language for Europe and Arabic for Asia. He considered that English or French was the most suitable social language for the educated classes, and indicated Russian — this is characteristic of his wide vision — as being the best language for the East.

After a stay of ten months in London, Komenský's work was brought to nought by the civil war. He then decided to accept the invitation of a wealthy and enlightened Dutch merchant, L. de Geer, who was purveyor of army stores to Sweden, to work with his support on the improvement of the Swedish schools and at the same time to bring into effect his pansophist ideals. With this object in view, Komenský estab-

lished himself in 1642 in the town of Elbing in Prussia. A year later he published here his «*Pansophiae diatyposis*» (*Plán vševědy*), in which he adapted his didactical and methodical principles to the purposes of pansophia. He divides his subject into five sections which are interconnected and graded in an ascending scale: the doctrine of common concepts or ideas (*idealía*); natural science (*naturalía*) together with an account of man, his achievements and productions (*artificialía*); the doctrine of spiritual things in the Christian sense (*spiritualía*); and finally the section on how to know God and draw near to Him (*aeterna*).

Komenský's pansophist works, especially the «*Silva pansophica*» which was arranged systematically like a kind of encyclopaedic dictionary, were destroyed by fire in 1656 at Leszno, together with other of his important works. At the end of his life Komenský was again working energetically on his pansophist plans. These were only rectifications of the former construction of the work; he was not destined to build up the entire structure. During his stay in Elbing he had to accede to the wish of the Swedish Chancellor Oxenstiern and work on didactic books, as has been already stated. He also had other obstacles,

the chief of which was the immensity of his plan.

The culmination of the pansophist endeavours connected with the highest humanitarian aims is expressed in Komenský's work entitled «*De rerum humanorum emendatione consultatio catholica*» (*Všeobecná úrada o napravení věcí lidských*). In this tractate the author calls upon all the leading educated men of his period to collaborate with him for the purpose «of introducing new light into schools, churches and States and providing all people and nations with a splendid storehouse of education in which nothing should be lacking». In this, as in previous works written in the difficult times of war, the author calls for peace, the brotherhood of nations with a view to the common good and the seeking of the truth, and for the universal manifestation of love for one's neighbour.

In these pansophist works Komenský showed a rare degree of erudition in the contemporary sciences; he discusses in them all the main branches of knowledge, which he endeavoured to combine in a fruitful synthesis. According to him, human knowledge must be crowned by the spirit of humanitarianism so that it can make man perfect for union with God. It is clear from a reading of Komenský's pansophist works that

he believed that they would have the apostolic task of preparing the world for Christ's millennium on earth.

In Komenský we see the conclusion of the struggles waged in the Bohemian Reformation over the true relation of the Christian to secular education. That original thinker, the small landowner Chelčický, declared that if a Christian wished to preserve the true faith of Christ he should turn away from worldly learning as from heathenism. This view was preached also by other Czech Protestant Reformers. Jan Blahoslav, the greatest of Komenský's predecessors in the Church of the Unity of Brethren, strengthened the conviction of his fellow-believers that a thorough education was essential if their Church was to maintain its individuality in the struggle with the larger Churches. Komenský held that secular education was a very effective means to enable the individual to become otherworldly and then to draw close to God. In this way the Kingdom of Christ on earth would ensue.

In 1648, after living for eight years away from his fellow-countrymen, Komenský was asked by the Unity of Brethren to return to their main centre, the small Polish town of Leszno. He lived and worked for the Unity all his life. The greater the difficulties confront-

ing the Unity, the smaller the number of its more educated men, the higher and more responsible the functions entrusted to him (he was the senior and secretary of the Unity), the larger was the share of the work which he undertook for his fellow-believers. To satisfy their religious needs, he compiled various works, e. g., «*Praxis pietatis t. j. Cvičení se v pobožnosti pravé*». He composed for them practical sermons, a book on the theory of preaching entitled «*Umění kazatelské*», and other tractates for the improvement of Divine service and of piety; he wrote a proposal for the renewal of the Unity in its native country; he composed hymns and published hymn-books. He preserved the individual character of the Unity from the influence of the Socinians, and took up the cudgels on its behalf against the intolerant and vain Samueli Martini of Dražov. In his polemical writings («*Oblášení*» and «*Cesta pokoje*») Komenský was concerned not merely with warding off the attacks of Martini. His endeavours carried him much further; he wished to instil into the distracted Protestant Churches the idea of Christian peace and to unite them for common work. Out of love and gratitude to his Church, Komenský took part in the work on the «*Historia perse-*

cutionum » (1648), a notable and beautiful work intended to provide moral support for the Bohemian Brethren and information for foreign Protestants; there were several Czech editions of this work, and later it appeared in German, English and French translations. He translated into Czech several extracts from the extensive Latin history of the Unity of Brethren written by the Polish historian Jan Lasicki (Lasicius), who was full of enthusiastic praise for the Unity. This history, entitled «*De origine et rebus gestis Fratrum Bohemorum*», was published in 1649.

The Church of the Bohemian Brethren had need of Komenský's powerful spirit, for the unspeakable sufferings of the Czech Protestants were to be increased still further. The Peace of Westphalia destroyed the last hopes of the Protestant exiles who had been nursing the illusion that they would one day return to their native country. During the peace negotiations no-one paid any serious attention to the claims of these unfortunate people, and consequently in a letter dated October 11th, 1648, Komenský heaped bitter and painful reproaches on the head of the Chancellor Oxenstiern. In the greatest grief, and fearing that the end had come for his dearly-beloved Church, Komenský

wrote the deeply touching «*Křaſt umírající matky Jednoty bratrské*» (Last Testament of the Dying Mother, the Unity of Brethren). Like all Komenský's works, this is permeated with the spirit and literary style of the Holy Scriptures. It is filled with deep sorrow. The author looks for a reason in the moral decline of the members of the Unity of Brethren. He appreciates with deep understanding the merits of Hus and Luther in connection with the Reformation; on the other hand, he writes bitterly against the victorious Church of Rome. In the «Last Testament» he expressed more warmly than in other writings his love for his native land, the Czech people and the Czech language. Addressing the Czech nation, he wrote the memorable prophecy: «I believe that after the whirlwind of God's anger has passed, the government of your affairs will again return into your own hands, O Czech people!» The last bishop of the Bohemian Brethren bases his belief on the fact that the Czechs were the first nation to show love for Divine truth. He ascribes to his Church the merit of raising the level of Czech literature and particularly of presenting to the nation a translation of the Bible that surpassed all other similar translations. The same mood of deep sorrow which

was characteristic of the Czech exiles after the Peace of Westphalia, and also their full surrender to the will of God combined with a human pathos are expressed in other of Komenský's Czech writings, and notably in the beautiful «*Smutný hlas hněvem božím zaplašeného pastýře k rozplašenému, hynoucímu stádu*» (1660). Despite the mood of depression in this tractate, the reader perceives that underlying it is the author's faith that the Unity of Brethren will continue to live and also maintain its spirit and high educational level. Hence at the end of his life the last bishop of the Unity published Czech books with greater zeal than ever before: his older writings of spiritual comfort and his later sermons, a large hymn-book, and similar works.

For a time Komenský hoped for a turn of events in connection with Hungarian affairs. In 1650 he left Leszno and his family and went to live in Šaryšský Potok in Hungary at the invitation of the enlightened Prince Zikmund Rákoczy who desired him to found there a model institution in accordance with his plans. In the midst of difficult conditions — the population, as compared with the West, was considerably neglected from the cultural point of view, both pupils and teachers showed little zeal, and many of the courtiers

and other helpers were jealous of his activities — Komenský threw himself into the work of establishing a pansophist school, for which he wrote a detailed plan. The school was to contain seven classes and Komenský started the first three; he adapted for them some of his older didactic books and rewrote his «Brána jazyků». He added a section on school plays («*Schola ludus*» — *Škola hrou*) which were to be performed by the pupils and thus impressed on their minds. Of the newly compiled works the «*Orbis pictus*» (Svět v obrazech) soon became a popular book throughout the educated world. In the succeeding centuries it was published many times as a textbook, and hence furthered a great deal the method of teaching by means of pictures.

It was chiefly political ends, however, that drew Komenský to Hungary: he placed his hopes in the young Prince of Transylvania, Zikmund Rakoczy, whose wife was the daughter of the «Winter King» of Bohemia, Frederick of the Palatinate, who had soon been driven from his kingdom. According to the ideas of Komenský, Prince Zikmund had a great task before him. In his «*Sermo secretus Nathanis in Davidem*» (*Tajná řeč Nathanaele k Davidovi*), Komenský explained to him that he was to become a Gedeon and avenge the wrong done to

the sorely-tried Protestant Church by Babylon, the Habsburg family and the Pope. The premature death of the young princely pair destroyed the hopes of the author. In another work, «*Gentis felicitas*», which was written on Hungarian territory, Komenský drew the portrait of a good ruler who establishes «the happiness of the nation» on good public finances, on regulated Church conditions and on a satisfactory educational system, thus ensuring the contentedness of his subject peoples. At the same time Komenský asked for the protection of the oppressed Protestant exiles. With the same object in view, the emancipation of the Protestants, Komenský wrote his «*Panegyricus Carolo Gustavo*» (1655) on the occasion of the attack on Poland made by the Swedish King, Charles Gustavus. On account of this propaganda against the Habsburgs and the Pope, Komenský, the unwearying exponent of pacifism, was accused of inconsistency. We understand his standpoint, however, from his chiliastic conviction. For him the Habsburgs, the Pope and the Jesuits were the most powerful instruments of Anti-Christ. Against the «raging of Anti-Christ» he wished to unite the Protestant princes; indeed, he was disposed to accept help from the Turks who at that time already had Hungary in their power,

and he hoped that the light of Christianity would reach them by the common efforts of the Christian educated classes and the princes. Again he experienced a temporary revival of his hopes that the Protestant exiles would return to their native country. Throughout the whole time that he lived outside his home-land, Komenský believed in the prophecies of visionaries that there would soon be an end to the sufferings of his adherents. In this matter, it is true of him, as of many of his contemporaries who were equally visited by misfortune, that mysticism and utopianism took the upperhand in his soul. Moreover, there was no reading more interesting for them at that time than the predictions of contemporary prophets. The keen mind of Komenský was unable to see clearly through the mists of attractive prophecies, even when they had several times disappointed him. He also had to meet the reproach — a not unjustified one — that he had caused Prince George Rakoczy to believe in prophecies and had thus contributed to his ruin when in 1660 he fell in battle against the Habsburgs.

Four years later Komenský returned to Leszno where, owing to the defection of the magnate Bohuslav Leszczynski, a pupil of Komenský's, to Catholi-

cism, the situation had considerably worsened for the Bohemian Brethren. During the Polish-Swedish war, when, owing to the intervention of Komenský, Leszno was spared by the Swedes, the Polish nobles themselves burned the town in 1656. This act meant for the Unity the end of their strongest centre. Komenský lost his property, including a large library and his manuscripts, particularly the «Poklad jazyka českého» which he had only just completed after working on it in his spare time for more than forty years; the author regretted these losses more than the destruction of his pansophist works.

He was freed from new hardships and the prospect of further wanderings by the generosity of Lawrence de Geer who followed the example of his father Louis, «the great almsgiver of Europe», as Komenský named him. De Geer offered the sorely-tried old man a hospitable refuge at Amsterdam where from 1656 he spent the last years of his active life in quietness and work. In 1657 he began to publish there his «*Opera didactica omnia*» and other works, in Latin and Czech, mention of which has been made above. He continued to work on his political plans and irenical ideas, which constituted his favourite interest.

Komenský was an enthusiastic supporter of the idea of eternal peace and the union of the Churches. To a certain extent these aims had been advocated before him in Bohemia by various members of the Unity of Brethren, and especially by Václav Budovec. In the midst of constant struggles and quarrels among the Protestant Churches, amid the disturbances and horrors of war many noble spirits held fast to the cause of peace. Many writings of an irenical character were composed by the celebrated Dutch Humanist, Hugo Grotius; much was written in favour of the cause of peace by the Heidelberg Professor of Theology, David Pareus, the teacher of many of the foremost Bohemian Brethren and of Komenský himself; a most active adherent of irenical ideas was the Englishman Dury (Dureus) who travelled about Europe preaching the ideals of peace and brotherhood. Komenský worked unwearingly in the cause of irenism. He discussed the revival of the Unity of Brethren, as the organizer of a united Protestant Church in Bohemia, in the Czech work «*Haggaeus redivivus*», in which he exhorted the Christian princes and priests to «devote themselves zealously to education and to the re-organization of God's house»; this work, written in 1632,

remained in manuscript form. The event which was the cause of its being written was the invasion of Bohemia by the Saxons in 1631. The author endeavours to revive the old simplicity and pure faith of the Protestant Church, and at the same time he suggests ways whereby to get rid of the disputes between the individual Churches. He did not desire, however, that the latter should abandon their respective ceremonies and doctrines. For the same purpose Komenský worked in London in order to strengthen love and tolerance among Christians. For the settlement of religious differences, for the pacification of mankind in the principles of true love for one's neighbour and of mutual freedom in the search for truth Komenský desired to work by means of his pansophist writings; and he incorporated these lofty ideas in his last works.

The writings of Komenský truly reflect his soul which felt the influence of the traditions of his Church, the Unity of Brethren, the special mood of his eventful age, his personal experiences, and particularly his many-sided relations with numerous thinkers of his period.

As a religious personality Komenský did not diverge from the foundations of the Church of the Unity of Brethren. His interest did not lie in dogma — he left no

writings of a purely dogmatic character — but in the practical side of the Christian religion. The Bible, which he called the «Word of God» and the «Source of Truth», was sufficient for him as the basis of faith. A manysided and profound scholar, he paid no heed to the Humanist critical tendencies in exegetic research; he preserved his faith in the Divine origin of the Scriptures, for he had the same faith as the Czech Reformers before his time. A modern investigator of nature, he was not convinced by the arguments in favour of the Copernican theory of the solar system, for they were not in accordance with the teaching of the Old Testament; like the Church of Rome, which otherwise he opposed, he desired to defend the old geocentric view. Komenský disapproved of any kind of speculation on the nature of God and on the sources of faith. His aim was to keep faith alive, to prove its reality by the actions of everyday life and to bring out in himself the Christian, of perfect morality and of strong and pure religion. It was with full trust that he surrendered himself to God; and therefore he was so great in his sufferings. By renunciation and suffering he sought a path to God; he wished to become «a man of God». His deep and at the same time simple piety, his love for his neighbour,

have about them something holy. That he became, from love for his fellow-believers, «a mystical beggar with a commercial sense» is high praise for him and not the opposite, as his philosophical opponent Samuel Mare-sius (des Marets), a theologian of the Reformed Church and a keen and malicious adversary of the Jesuits, wished to assert. Komenský arrived at a religious tolerance which was almost modern, despite the fact that the circumstances of his life compelled him to enter into polemics with quarrelsome opponents. Although he lived for the Unity of Brethren, he devoted much of his energy towards the creation of a united Christian Church which would put aside the dissensions arising from religious differences and would tend towards brotherhood and humanity.

The search for God is a characteristic idea in the Bohemian Reformation. The God of Komenský is different from the God of the first Reformers and especially from the God of Chelčický. The God of Komen-ský is more God-like and is the Supreme Being with the most perfect feeling and love; He loves man with warm human love and not with an abstract Divine love; He protects him from the assaults of the Devil by giving him perfect knowledge and a delicate moral sense; by

means of suffering He contributes to his ennobling and draws him to Himself. The Bible is man's safest guide to salvation. This conception of God, which is found in Komenský's works of religious consolation, brings comfort to man when he is bearing the burden of suffering and sorrow.

Like the Czech Reformers Hus, Chelčický and Blahoslav, Komenský endeavoured to help man to be born again so that he could manifest the spirit of God and a lofty morality; Komenský wished to see not only the individual but also his own nation and the whole of mankind thus reborn. Such utopianism was not acceptable to many of the realist thinkers of the time, but it filled those possessing a temperament similar to Komenský's with enthusiasm . . . Despite all his disappointments, Komenský did not abandon his mystical belief in the millennium; indeed, that belief may be described as the mental disease of the age. He frequently devoted his pen to this subject at the end of his life, particularly in the works entitled «*Lux in tenebris*» (1657) and «*Lux e tenebris*» (1665), which brought him into some bitter polemics. In order to meet the unceasing attacks of the rationalist Maresius, the defender of Habsburg rule and of that of all monarchs, the

old bishop of the Bohemian Brethren wrote a double reply which bears the characteristic title «Bratrská napomenutí p. Maresia pro zmenšení nenávisti a rozmnožení přízně» (1669). Komenský was hurt most of all by the attacks on his pansophist endeavours and works, which, Maresius said, had caused heavy pecuniary losses to Geer. His answer is a profound literary confession with many interesting reminiscences. In this polemical work the author's great personality stands out in particularly sharp relief.

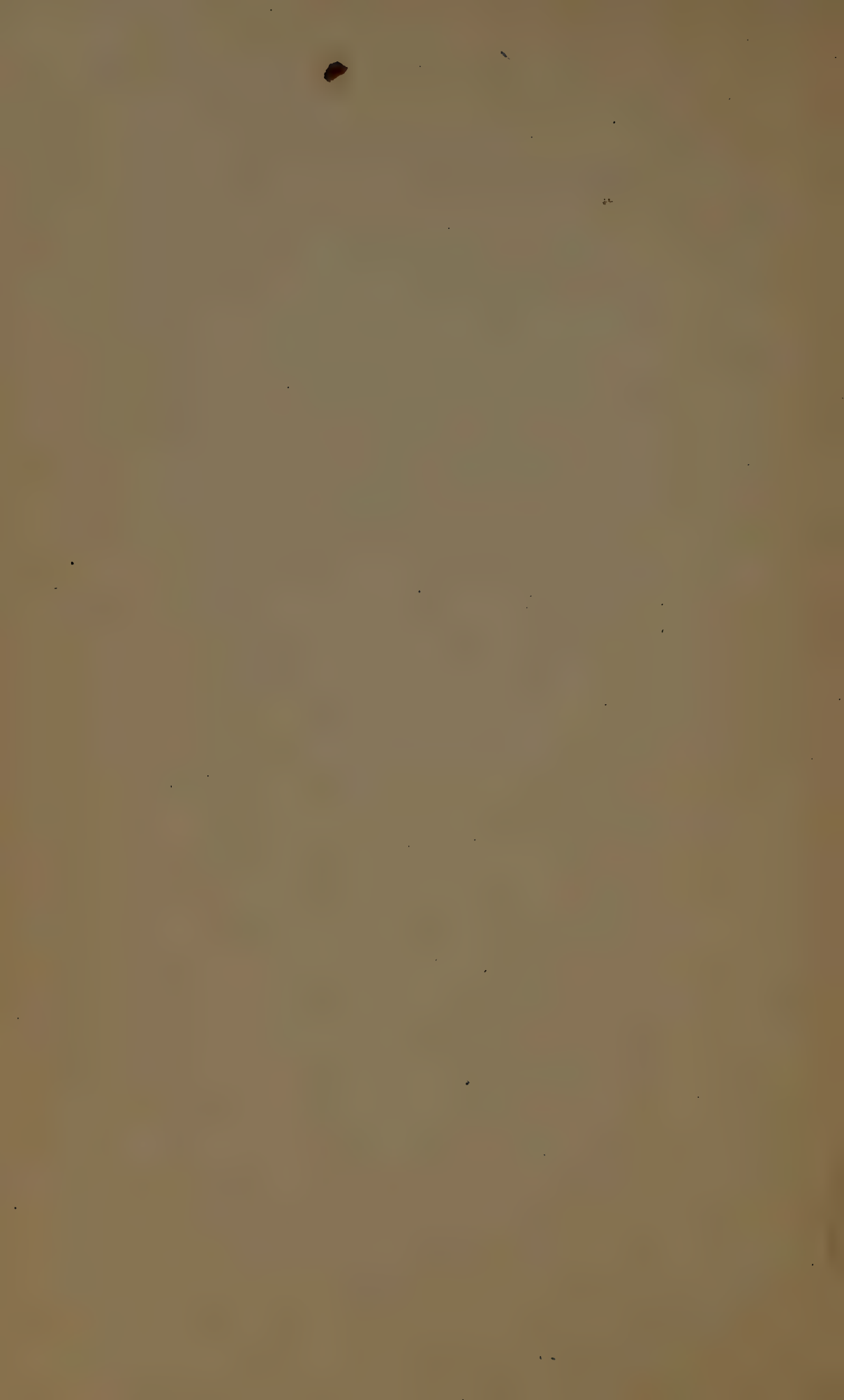
Shortly before his death Komenský, an aged man of 77, wrote his beautiful and profound «*Unum necessarium*» (*Jedno potřebné*; 1668), the title of which is taken from the Bible. The devout author wished to remove unnecessary or the less necessary things from human striving and activity, and above all in the case of leaders. In one place he summarized his philosophy as follows: «The art above all arts is to die well. Only a wise man can depart from this life with honour, for he has known how to conduct his whole life in such a way as to prepare himself for a glorious and blissful stepping into the Beyond. For what is there of more lasting value that a man can leave behind him than an honourable reputation? This is the one thing that is needful in our life».

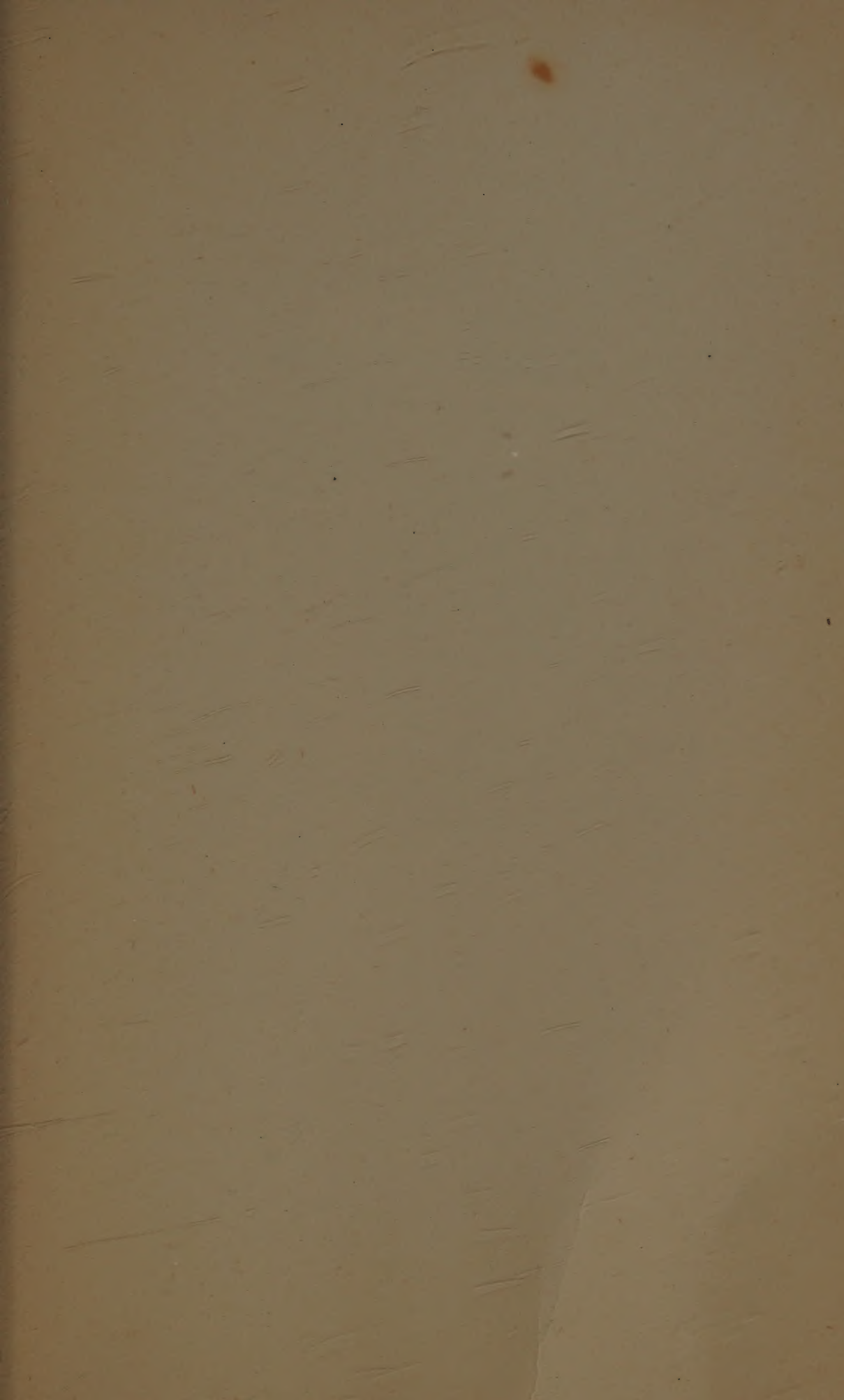
Komenský died on November 15th, 1671, and was buried at Naarden. In his literary work he left to his nation and to the whole world a great legacy; whilst preserving his national individuality, he kept in mind mankind as a whole; through the ennobling and improvement of his own nation he endeavoured to further the interests of the whole world. Under the most unfavourable conditions he always thought of the good of others. Christian humanity spoke from every one of his actions. A true patriot and son of his Church, he was free from all national or religious prejudice. Owing to the loftiness of his aims and the greatness of his personality he held the attention of the eminent men of all nations, and with many of them he conducted an extensive correspondence which is of considerable significance for an understanding of the period. (On account of unfavourable circumstances his influence could be felt by his own people only after the lapse of several centuries; prior to this, he helped his nation only through a foreign medium.)

This book has been printed in commemoration of the tricentenary of the departure of J. A. Komenský (Comenius) from his native country, by the »Orbis« Printing Company, in Garamond Type, under the editorship of M. Arthur Novák, for the Czech Academy of Arts and Literature, Prague. The portrait of Komenský is the work of the famous Czech engraver, Václav Hollar (1607-1677), a contemporary of Komenský. The foreword is from the pen of Professor Zubatý, president of the Czech Academy and the life of Komenský has been written by Dr. Jan Jakubec, professor of the Charles University of Prague.

*The production of the book has
been under the care
of M. V. Tille.*

JULY 1928





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